



Florida Agricultural Statistics Service
1222 Woodward Street
Orlando, Florida 32803
407 / 648-6013
<http://www.nass.usda.gov/fl>



FARM LABOR

May, 2004

FLORIDA

The number of workers paid by farmers and agricultural services totaled 66,000 for the week of April 11 through 17. Farmers hired 57,000 workers compared with 61,000 in January and 53,000 in April 2003. Agricultural services provided 9,000 paid workers, down 5,000 from last quarter and 8,000 from a year ago.

Storms at the beginning of the survey week gave way to dry conditions later in the week. Corn, soybean, cotton and peanut planting were active in the Panhandle and northern Peninsula with several growers delaying some activity due to dry soils. Sugarcane harvesting ceased prior to the labor survey week. Producers in the Hastings area dug the first few loads of potatoes as table type harvesting continued over the central and southern Peninsula. Harvesting of other vegetables and non-citrus fruit was active in

central and southern Peninsula areas. Grove caretakers irrigated citrus to maintain topsoil moisture supplies. Other citrus grove tasks included fertilizing, hedging, and applying post bloom sprays.

The April all hired worker wage rate averaged \$8.86 per hour, down six cents or almost one percent from the January wage of \$8.92, and twelve cents or one percent from the \$8.98 paid last year. Farmers paid an average of \$8.79 per hour, six cents lower than the \$8.85 paid in January, and seven cents lower than the \$8.86 paid last year. Agricultural services paid workers an average of \$9.25 per hour, equal to the January wage, but fifteen cents below the \$9.40 paid last year.

UNITED STATES

There were 1,077,000 hired workers on the Nation's farms and ranches during the week of April 11-17, 2004, up 15 percent from a year ago. Of these hired workers, 825,000 workers were hired directly by farm operators. Agricultural service employees on farms and ranches made up the remaining 252,000 workers.

Farm operators paid their hired workers an average wage of \$9.22 per hour during the April 2004 reference week, up 6 cents from a year earlier. Field workers received an average of \$8.46 per hour, up 6 cents from last April, while livestock workers earned \$8.95 per hour compared with \$8.75 a year earlier. The field and livestock worker combined wage rate, at \$8.58 per hour, was up 9 cents from last year.

The number of hours worked averaged 40.7 hours for hired workers during the survey week, up 1 percent from a year ago. The largest increases in the number of hired farm workers from last year occurred in the Pacific (Oregon and Washington), Southeast (Alabama, Georgia and South Carolina), Appalachian II (Kentucky, Tennessee and West Virginia) and Mountain I (Idaho, Montana and Wyoming) regions and in California. In the Pacific region and California, the development of fruit, vegetables and spring planted crops was nearly two weeks ahead of normal, which heightened the demand for hired workers. Although moderate rains fell in parts of the Southeast region, the majority of the region remained drier than normal. Irrigation of cropland increased and supplemental feeding of livestock became active as pastures deteriorated, both of which caused greater demand for hired workers. In the Appalachian II region, continued expansion in the equine and poultry industries kept the demand for livestock workers at a high level. In the Mountain I

region, above normal temperatures and below normal precipitation led to increased farm and ranch activity, which caused a greater need for hired workers.

The largest decreases in the number of hired farm workers from a year ago were in the Corn Belt I (Illinois, Indiana and Ohio), Delta (Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi), Southern Plains (Oklahoma and Texas), Northeast I (New York and New England) and Appalachian I (North Carolina and Virginia) regions. In the Corn Belt I region, declining cattle and poultry inventories lessened the need for livestock workers. Favorable weather prior to the reference week in the Delta region allowed field work to progress rapidly, thereby decreasing the need for workers during the reference week. In the Southern Plains region, growth of pastures and ranges was ahead of normal, which lessened the need for supplemental feeding and reduced the demand for hired workers. Cool temperatures and wet conditions in the Northeast I and Appalachian I regions limited field activity, causing fewer hired workers to be needed.

Hired farm worker wage rates were generally above a year ago in most regions. The largest increases occurred in the Appalachian II, Mountain I, Pacific and Mountain III (Arizona and New Mexico) regions. The higher wages in the Appalachian II region were mainly because of a higher percentage of equine workers in the work force. In the Mountain I region, wages were up due to a larger concentration of salaried workers putting in fewer hours. The higher wages in the Pacific region were because of the increased skilled worker demand for the rapidly developing fruit. In the Mountain III region, wages were up because of a higher proportion of full-time, salaried workers in the work force.

TABLE 1 -- Florida agricultural workers, number of workers, wage rates, and hours worked, April 11 - 17, 2004, with comparisons

Employer, Year, and survey week		Hired Workers						
		Number of workers			Hours Worked Per Week	Wages Paid by Type of Work		
						All	Expected to work	
		150 days or more	149 days or less					
HIRED BY FARMERS								
		<i>Thousands</i>		<i>Hours</i>		<i>Dollars Per Hour ^{1/}</i>		
2004	April 11 - 17	57.0	53.0	4.0	38.3	8.79	7.85	8.60
	January 11-17	61.0	54.0	7.0	41.7	8.85	7.70	8.60
2003	October 12 -18	49.0	43.0	6.0	39.1	9.53	8.55	7.95
	July 6 - 12	45.0	39.0	6.0	39.0	9.55	8.55	8.30
	April 6 - 12	53.0	42.0	11.0	38.3	8.86	8.05	8.10
	January 12 - 18	70.0	56.0	14.0	37.2	8.81	7.80	8.30
2002	October 6 - 12	57.0	51.0	6.0	38.9	8.67	7.50	8.60
	July 7 - 13	43.0	38.0	5.0	37.5	8.48	7.25	7.80
	April 7 - 13	52.0	46.0	6.0	40.6	8.57	7.75	7.50
HIRED BY AGRICULTURAL SERVICES								
2004	April 11 - 17	9.0			38.0	9.25		
	January 11 - 17	14.0			38.5	9.25		
2003	October 12 -18	4.0			38.0	9.65		
	July 6 - 12	3.0			41.0	9.25		
	April 6 - 12	17.0			33.0	9.40		
	January 12 - 18	17.0			32.0	9.35		
2002	October 6 - 12	5.0			31.5	9.00		
	July 7 - 13	4.0			42.5	9.25		
	April 7 - 13	11.0			34.0	9.00		
HIRED BY BOTH FARMERS & AGRICULTURAL SERVICES								
2004	April 11 - 17	66.0				8.86		
	January 11 - 17	75.0				8.92		
2003	October 12 -18	53.0				9.54		
	July 6 - 12	48.0				9.53		
	April 6 - 12	70.0				8.98		
	January 12 - 18	87.0				8.90		
2002	October 6 - 12	62.0				8.69		
	July 7 - 13	47.0				8.55		
	April 7 - 13	63.0				8.63		

^{1/} Benefits, such as housing and meals, are provided some workers but the values are not included in the wage rates.

**TABLE 2 -- Number of workers hired by farmers, wage rates, and hours worked,
selected States, April 11 - 17, 2004, with comparisons ^{1/}**

Item	Florida	California	Texas & Oklahoma	Arizona & New Mexico	Hawaii	United States ^{2/}
<i>Thousands</i>						
ALL HIRED WORKERS						
April 11 - 17, 2004	57	232	46	17	7	825
January 11 - 17, 2004	61	* 190	60	16	7	* 662
April 6 - 12, 2003	53	220	49	16	7	781
EXPECTED TO WORK						
150 days or more						
April 11 - 17, 2004	53	187	38	16	6	648
January 11 - 17, 2004	54	* 155	45	15	6	* 549
April 6 - 12, 2003	42	185	38	15	6	619
149 days or less						
April 11 - 17, 2004	4	45	8	1	1	177
January 11 - 17, 2004	7	35	15	1	1	113
April 6 - 12, 2003	11	35	11	1	1	162
<i>Dollars per hour ^{3/}</i>						
ALL HIRED WORKER WAGE RATE						
April 11 - 17, 2004	8.79	9.26	8.13	8.37	11.26	9.22
January 11 - 17, 2004	8.85	* 9.47	8.43	8.37	11.11	9.41
April 6 - 12, 2003	8.86	9.22	8.31	7.93	11.50	9.16
WAGES BY TYPE OF WORKER						
Field & Livestock						
April 11 - 17, 2004	7.94	8.52	7.62	7.81	9.66	8.58
January 11 - 17, 2004	7.77	8.54	7.73	7.69	9.39	8.55
April 6 - 12, 2003	8.06	8.48	7.75	7.52	9.63	8.49
Field						
April 11 - 17, 2004	7.85	8.39	7.50	7.55	9.51	8.46
January 11 - 17, 2004	7.70	* 8.41	7.46	7.44	9.26	8.39
April 6 - 12, 2003	8.05	8.33	7.62	7.10	9.58	8.40
Livestock						
April 11 - 17, 2004	8.60	10.00	7.93	8.20	^{4/}	8.95
January 11 - 17, 2004	8.60	* 9.25	7.97	7.98	^{4/}	* 8.83
April 6 - 12, 2003	8.10	10.15	7.98	8.24	^{4/}	8.75
<i>Average hours per week</i>						
HOURS WORKED BY ALL HIRED WORKERS						
April 11 - 17, 2004	38.3	46.2	41.0	45.7	37.7	40.7
January 11 - 17, 2004	41.7	* 41.8	34.0	44.9	39.4	38.1
April 6 - 12, 2003	38.3	43.1	40.7	47.3	35.6	40.1

^{1/} Excludes Agricultural Service workers.

^{2/} United States excludes Alaska.

^{3/} Value of any perquisites provided are not included in wage rates.

^{4/} Insufficient data for this category; included in all hired wages.

* Revised.

RELIABILITY OF FARM LABOR ESTIMATES

SURVEY PROCEDURES: These data were collected by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) during the last two weeks of April using sampling procedures to ensure every employer of agricultural workers had a chance of being selected. Two samples of farm operators are selected. First, NASS maintains a list of farms that hire farm workers. Farms on this list are classified by size and type. Those expected to employ large numbers of workers are selected with greater frequency than those hiring few or no workers. A second sample consists of segments of land scientifically selected from an area sampling frame. Each June, highly trained interviewers locate each selected land segment and identify every farm operating land within the sample segment's boundaries. The names of farms found in these area segments are matched against the NASS list of farms; those not found on the list are included in the labor survey sample to represent all farms. This methodology is known as multiple frame sampling, with an area sample used to measure the incompleteness of the list. Additionally, a list of agricultural service firms was sampled in California and Florida. The survey reference week was April 11-17, 2004.

RELIABILITY: Two types of errors, sampling and non-sampling, are always present in an estimate based on a sample survey. Both types affect the "accuracy" of the estimates.

Sampling error occurs because a complete census is not taken. The sampling error measures the variation in estimates from the average of all possible samples. An estimate of 100 with a sampling error of 1 would mean that chances are 19 out of 20 that the estimates from all possible samples averaged together would be between 98 and 102; which is the survey estimate, plus or minus two times the sampling error. The sampling error expressed as a percent of the estimate is called the relative sampling error. The relative sampling error for number of hired workers at the U.S. level is normally less than 5 percent. The relative sampling error for the number of hired workers generally

ranged between 10 and 22 percent at the regional level. The U.S. all hired farm worker wage rate had a relative sampling error of 1.9 percent. The relative sampling error was 1.2 percent for the combined field and livestock worker wage rate. Relative sampling errors for the all hired farm worker wage rate generally ranged between 2 and 27 percent at the regional levels. Relative sampling errors for wage rates published by type of farm and economic class of farm generally ranged between 1 and 55 percent at the regional level.

Non-sampling errors can occur in a complete census as well as in sample surveys. They are caused by the inability to obtain correct information from each operation sampled, differences in interpreting questions or definitions, and mistakes in editing, coding or processing the data. Special efforts are taken at each step of the survey to minimize non-sampling errors.

REVISION POLICY: Farm labor information is subject to revision the next time the information is published or the year after the original publication date. The basis for revision must be supported by additional data that directly affect the level of the estimate. Worker numbers and wage rates for April 2003 and January 2004 were subject to revision with this report. If any revisions were made to previous data, they are reprinted in this report for your information, and they are identified as such.

Next Farm Labor Publication Date: The August 20th report will have information for the survey week of July 11-17, 2004. The report will include the number of All Hired Workers, Average Hours Worked by Hired Workers and the All Hired Worker Wage Rates at the Regional and U.S. levels. The wage rates for field, livestock, and combined field and livestock workers will also be available at the Regional and U.S. level. The number of Agricultural Service Workers and the corresponding wage rates will be published for California and Florida.